

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 08388 102346Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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DEPARTMENT ALSO PASS ARA REGIONAL LABOR ADVISOR JOHN O'GRADY

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJECT: RALLY IN CANAL ZONE

REF: PANAMA 8318

SUMMARY: DURING DECEMBER 7 RALLY, PRESIDENT OF CANAL ZONE CENTRAL LABOR UNION-METAL TRADES COUNCIL (CLU-MTC) ASSOCIATED CLU-MTC WITH SUIT BY WILLIAM DRUMMOND TO ENJOIN CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. HE STATED THAT DRUMMOND HAD BROUGHT SUIT IN HIS CAPACITY AS CLUAMTC LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE. EIGHT LOCALS OF AFL-CIO AFFILIATES PARTICIPATED IN RALLY. RALLY AND DRUMMOND SUIT HAVE SHARPLY DIVIDED ORGANIZED LABOR IN ZONR. PANAMANIAN MEDIA HAVE NOT ATTACKED U.S. ORGANIZED LABOR TO DATE, BUT HAVE VILIFIED CLU-MTC. END SUMMARY.

1. PUBLIC RALLY DECEMBER 7 AT BALBOA STADIUM (REFTEL) WAS FORMALLY REQUESTED BY CLU-MTC. LETTER MAKING REQUEST (COPIES POUCHED ARA/PAN AND O'GRADY) DESCRIBED THE RALLY AS A "JOINT ORGANIZED LABOR-CIVIC COUNCIL" EVENT, AND ITS PURPOSE AS "TO INDICATE SUPPORT OF MR. DRUMMOND'S COURT APPLICATION TO INSURE THE RIGHT OF THE U.S. CONGRESS TO BE INCLUDED IN ANY PANAMA-U.S. TREATY NEGOTIA
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 08388 102346Z

TIONS AS FAR AS THE GIVING AWAY OF

U.S. OWNED PROPERTY IS CONCERNED."

2. IN ADDITION TO CLU-MTCN REPRESENTED BY PRESIDENT ALFRED GRAHAM (MASTER OF CEREMONIES AND OPENING SPEAKER) AND LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM DRUMMOND (ALSO PRESIDENT OF CANAL ZONE POLICE LODGE), THE FOLLOWING UNIONS PARTICIPATED IN RALLY, WITH REPRESENTATIVES IDENTIFIED ON PLATFORM: AFGE LODGES 1788 (CANAL ZONE POLICE LODGE); 1805 (CANAL ZONE NURSES); AND 2381 (CANAL ZONE CUSTOMS ASSOCIATION); INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS, LOCAL 397; INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS, LOCAL 13; INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS, LOCAL 811; MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION, PANAMA CANAL BRANCH; AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, LOCAL 29. GRAHAM, DRUMMOND AND LEO FATTUROSÌ OF AFT LOCAL 29 WERE ONLY UNION REPRESENTATIVES WHO SPOKE AT RALLY.

3. ALTHOUGH PANAMA CANAL PILOTS ASSOCIATION DID NOT FORMALLY PARTICIPATE IN RALLY, ONE PILOT (CAPT. LEONARD BELL) WAS PRESENT AND SPOKE AS AN INDIVIDUAL. (BELL IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF PILOTS' ASSOCIATION.)

4. GRAHAM SAID IN OPENING THE RALLY THE CLU-MTC WAS FULLY SUPPORTING DRUMMOND'S SUIT AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. DRUMMOND, HE SAID, HAD BROUGHT THE SUIT "IN HIS CAPACITY AS LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CLU-MTC". DRUMMOND IDENTIFIED HIS SUIT AS AN ACTION OF HIS LABOR ORGANIZATION, NOT AS AN ACTION SOLELY ON HIS OWN BEHALF.

5. THE RALLY AND THE DEBATE OVER WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE DRUMMOND SUIT HAVE SHARPLY DIVIDED ORGANIZED LABOR IN THE ZONE. THE PREDOMINANTLY PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN LOCALS OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES DENOUNCED THE RALLY AS PURE POLITICS AND DID NOT PARTICIPATE. LOCAL BRANCH OF NMU, ALSO PREDOMINANTLY PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN, AND BOTH LOCAL AFFILIATES OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PANAMA 08388 102346Z

MASTERS, MATES AND PILOTS (IAMMP)--ONE OF WHICH, LOCAL 30, IS PANAMA CANAL PILOTS' ASSOCIATION--PUBLISHED A LETTER TO THE SAME EFFECT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT DEBATE WITHIN CLU-MTC LAST WEEK BECAME SO ACrimonious THAT LOCAL 27 OF IAMMP MAY DISAFFILIATE FROM CLU-MTC AS A RESULT. ONLY 8 OF SOME 18 CLU-MTC AFFILIATES WERE PRESENT.

6. LOCAL REACTION TO RALLY HAS BEEN LIGHT AND RESTRAINED TO DATE. "STAR AND HERALD" AND "ESTRELLA" PRINTED BRIEF FRONT-PAGE ARTICLES CALLING THE RALLY "POORLY ATTENDED" BUT OTHERWISE MAKING NO SUBSTANTIAL COMMENT. "EL PANAMA AMERICA" ON DECEMBER 9 CALLED THE MEETING A "RESOUNDING FAILURE", AND CONTINUED: "THE POOR ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING SIGNIFIES THE FACT THAT, FUNDAMENTALLY, THERE ARE FEW WHO RETAIN A RETROGRADE COLONIALIST MENTALITY..." "CRITICA", WASPISH AS USUAL, WAS ONLY PAPER TO COMMENT DECEMBER 10, DEVOTING TWO PARAGRAPHS IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL TO CONTRAST THE "FAILURE" OF THE RALLY AND ITS "STUPID" PETITIONS WITH A PUBLIC MEETING MELD BY TORRIJOS EARLIER IN THE WEEK.

7. COMMENT: THIS OPEN AND EXPLICIT ASSOCIATION OF THE CLU-MTC WAS AN ORGANIZATION WITH DRUMMOND'S SUIT RAISES A FAIRLY SERIOUS EXPOSURE FOR THE U.S. LABOR MOVEMENT IN PANAMA AND THE CANAL ZONE. LOCAL REACTION HAS BEEN MODERATED BY RELATIVELY LOW ATTENDANCE, BUT THE ORGANIZATIONAL EXPOSURE REMAINS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT LEAST AFGE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WAS IN TOUCH WITH SOME OF ITS CANAL ZONE LOCALS PRIOR TO RALLY TO COUNSEL NONPARTICIPATION. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY INDICATION DEPARTMENT CAN OBTAIN OF WHETHER AFL-CIO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP SOUGHT, OR MAY SEEK N TO INTERVENE SIMILARLY WITH ITS CANAL ZONE CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL. END COMMENT.
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